

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 101600Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 159

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

COMNAVBASE GTMO

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 4 KINGSTON 590

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, JM

SUBJECT KINGSTON VIOLENCE

REF: A) STATE 11585 (NOTAL), B) KINGSTON 207, C) KINGSTON 367

D) KINGSTON 533

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER MANLEY WILL TRY TO USE THE RECENT AND CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN THE KINGSTON GHETTO AS JUSTIFICATION TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER. MARTIAL LAW IS FAR FROM IMMINENT BUT IS A REAL OPTION. MINISTER OF HOUSING SPAULDING IS NOT AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO MANLEY AS HE HAS HIS HANDS FULL TRYING TO KEEP CONTROL OF HIS CONSTITUENCY. AS LONG AS MANLEY'S MOVE TO THE LEFT IS GRADUAL, IT UNLIKELY THAT ANY FORCES WILL EMERGE OR COALESCE STRONG ENOUGH TO STOP HIM. THE OPPOSITION JLP HAS LITTLE TO GAIN FROM STIRRING UP VIOLENCE. DESPITE THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT AND THE CHAOTIC STATE OF THE ECONOMY, IT WOULD BE RELECTED IF THERE WERE ANY ELECTION TOMORROW, ALBIET WITH A REDUCED MAJORITY. MANLEY'S CHARISMA IS INTACT WITH THE POOR AND THE YOUTH, AND THEY HAVE GOT THE VOTES

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TO OVERCOME THE DEFECTION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

END SUMMARY

2. INTRODUCTION: QUESTIONS POSED REFTEL A ARE REPEATED ALONG WITH FOLLOWING ANSWERS FOR BENEFIT OF INFORMATION ADDRESSEES. " HIGHLY CHARGED RUMOR MILL" IS A RATHER HACKNEYED FOREIGN SERVICE EXPRESSION. UNFORTUNATELY, IT ACCURATELY DESCRIBES CURRENT QUALITY OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN JAMAICA. TROUBLING IS NUMBER OF NORMALLY INTELLIGENT PEOPLE WHO ARE ACCEPTING AS FACT ALL SORTS OF SILLY STORIES, (E.G. U.S. EMBASSY EVACUATING IN FIVE DAYS, CIA TRIED TO POISON WATER RESERVOIR) AND ARE PASSING THEM ON AS IF GOSPEL. GRESHAM'S LAW APPARENTLY HAS TAKEN OVER. OUR REPLY TO REFERENCE A IS ADMITTEDLY SPECULATIVE, IMPRESSIONISTIC AND IN MANY WAYS A BEST "GUESTIMATE". WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO DEFINE IT AS MORE FACTS BEGIN TO EMERGE ABOUT RECNET EVENTS

3. DIRECTION IN WHICH MANLEY IS MOST LIKELY TO TURN IN RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE (MANLEY'S EARLY RESPONSE SUGGESTS HE IS YIELDING TO THE LEFT, WHEREAS HE MIGHT HAVE CHOSEN TO CLAMP DOWN ON THIS GROUP). WILL HE USE THE VIOLENCE AS AN EXCUSE TO ATTEMPT TO CRUSH HIS OPPOSITION?

A. MANLEY'S FEBRUARY 4 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND A "NON-PARTISAN" EFFORT TO BRING VIOLENCE UNDER CONTROL (REF D) WAS A WELCOME SHIFT FROM HIS PREVIOUSLY INTENSE PARTISAN REACTION TO THE VIOLENCE. WHETHER HIS CONCILIATORY WORDS WILL BE BACKED UP BY DEEDS REMAINS TO BE SEEN. NOTEWORTHY IS THE FACT THAT HE HAS BACKED OFF HIS BLANKET CONSPIRACY ACCUSATION AGAINST THE JLP. NONETHELESS, HE WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO USE THE VIOLENCE ISSUE TO UNDERMINE THE JLP.

B. MANLEY IN THE PAST WEEK HAS TONED DOWN THE RHETORIC SOMEWHAT AND STARTED BEHAVING IN A MORE STATESMANLIKE MANNER, BUT HAS NOT ABANDONED THE PROPOSAL FOR A PNP "SELF-DEFENSE FORCE", ALTHOUGH HE SEMANTICLY DOWNGRADED IT TO A "WATCHMAN SERVICE" (REF B), NOR HAS HE BACKED OFF ON HIS INTENTION TO PRESENT LEGISLATION DEALING WITH "ACTS

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AND UTTERANCES AIMED AT UNDERMINING THE DULY CONSTITUTED AUTHORITY OF THE STATE" (REF C). LEGISLATION AMENDING THE GUN COURT HAS BEEN RUSHED THROUGH BOTH HOUSES AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAS SAID HE INTENDS TO USE IT TO ELIMINATE THE POLITICAL GUNMEN.

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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C. IN SHORT, IT DOES NOT SEEM MANLEY WILL USE THIS RECENT
ROUND OF VIOLENCE AS AN EXCUSE TO CRUSH THE OPPOSITION.
HOWEVER, HE HAS USED IT TO INCREASE HIS CAPABILITY OR
POWER TO DO SO AT A LATER DATE

4. IS MANLEY PREPARING TO ALTER THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
THROUGH MARTIAL OR OTHER MEASURES?

A. MANLEY IS PREOCCUPIED WITH THE MAINTENANCE OF POWER.
THE DECLARATION OF MARTIAL LAW OR STATE OF PUBLIC EMERGENCY
CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS AN OPTION TO BE EXERCISED BY THE
PRIME MINISTER. IT IS A DISTASTEFUL OPTION, HOWEVER, AND WOULD BE
THE LAST CHOSEN. THE ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES,
OR THE PRETENSE THERETO, IS IMPORTANT. IMPLICIT IN MARTIAL
LAW IS AN ADMISSION OF FAILURE. MICHAEL MANLEY'S PRIDE
AND EGO WOULD HELP FORESTALL ANY SUCH DECLARATION UNTIL
THE LAST MINUTE.

B. A DECLARATION OF A STATE OF PUBLIC EMERGENCY MUST BE
PROCLAIMED BY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL UNDER THE CONSTITUTION.
FOLLOWING IS WELL ON THE SPECULATIVE SIDE, BUT MUST BE MENTIONED.

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GG FLORIZEL GLASSPOLE IS DEEPLY DISTURBED BY WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE A DRIFT TO A ONE-PARTY STATE AND JUST MIGHT DENY THE MECHANICAL SIGN-OFF EXPECTED OF HIM. EMBASSY CONSIDERS THE POSSIBILITY STRONG ENOUGH TO INHIBIT MANLEY FROM TRYING THE MARTIAL LAW OPTION UNLESS SORELY PRESSED.

C. MORE LIKELY THAN MARTIAL LAW IS A MANIPULATION OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS THROUGH WELL ORGANIZED THUGGERY AND INTIMIDATION. THE EFFORT TO FORM THE PNP "SELF-DEFENSE FORCE" OR "WATCHMAN SERVICE" COULD BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD ORGANIZING A PNP-BASED POPULAR MILITIA FOR USE AT THE NEXT ELECTION. WHILE NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE HAS SURFACED SO FAR, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT SOME OF THE HUNDREDS OF CUBAN "TECHNICIANS" ENTERING THE COUNTRY WILL BE PROVIDING PARA-MILITARY TRAINING FOR PNP YOUTH

5. WHAT ARE SPAULDING'S MOTIVES IN EXPANDING HIS POWER WITHIN THE GHETTO AREA; IS HE PREPARED TO CONTEST MANLEY OPENLY FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE PNP?

A. MINISTER OF HOUSING SPAULDING IS AN EDUCATED THUG WITH PORTFOLIO. FIRST ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT IN 1972 WITH A MAJORITY OF ONLY 102 VOTES, HE IS NOT A POPULAR POLITICIAN. FEAR AND FORCE COMMAND HIS CONSTITUENCY. WHILE HE UNQUESTIONABLY WOULD LIKE TO EXPAND HIS INFLUENCE IN THE GHETTO AREA, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE VIOLENCE HIS GUNMEN ARE PERPETRATING IS AIMED AT DEFENDING AND CONSOLIDATING THE POWER HE NOW ENJOYS. HIS CONSTITUENCY WAS JLP PRIOR TO 1972 AND THE OPPOSITION AIMS TO WIN IT BACK. THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF THE JLP, WHICH IS LOCATED IN SPAULDING'S DISTRICT, WAS "TRASHED" A YEAR AGO. THE HOME OF NEVILLE HENRY, THE JLP CARETAKER (SPAULDING'S MOST LIKELY OPPOSITION OPPONENT IN THE NEXT ELECTION) WAS BOMBED SHORTLY THEREAFTER. DESPITE THE ROUGH STUFF THE OPPOSITION HAS NOT BEEN SCARED OFF. SPAULDING HAS GOT A FIGHT ON HIS HANDS. WE THINK HE WILL WIN, BUT AT A PRICE TO THE PNP. EVERY MEMBER OF THE GARRISON GANG COMMITTED TO INSURING SPAULDING'S POLITICAL SURVIVAL IN NORTHERN ST ANDREW WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO "MUSCLE" VOTERS IN OTHER CONSTITUENCIES IN A GENERAL ELECTION

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B. FUELED WITH A FEW BRANDIES, SPAULDING NEEDS LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO EXPAND ON WHAT HE WOULD DO ONCE INSTALLED IN JAMAICA HOUSE. AS PNP VICE PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF YOUTH HE IS CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL FOLLOWING AMONG THE YOUNG PARTY MILITANTS. HE IS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO CHALLENGE MANLEY'S LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER. IN

TWO OR THREE YEARS, PERHAPS, BUT NOT NOW. HE NEEDS
MANLEY'S SUPPORT AND VICE-VERSA. A "PALACE-COUP" IS
FUTURISTIC. THE PNP MUST FIRST BE FULLY RADICALIZED
AND THE OPPOSITION CRUSHED.

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OMB-01 /059 W
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R 101700Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 161
INFOR AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
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6. ARE THERE COUNTER-BALANCING FORCES LIKELY TO COME
INTO PLAY WITHIN THE PNP AND WITHIN JAMAICAN SOCIETY TO
CHECK MANLEY'S LEFTWARD DRIFT AND SPAULDING'S EXCESSES?

A. THE SERVICE CLUBS (LIONS, KIWANIS, ETC), CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE, AND MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION HAVE ALL SPOKEN
OUT AGAINST MANLEY'S LEFTWARD DRIFT ("SELF-DEFENSE FORCE",
CUBAN CONNECTION, ETC.), BUT TO NO AVAIL. TO THE
PRIME MINISTER THEY ARE ANACHRONISMS, ENEMIES, AND FORCES
LACKING IN SIGNIFICANT CONSTITUENCIES. GIVEN MANLEY'S PERSPECTIVE,
HE IS RIGHT. THEY ARE STATUS-QUO ORIENTED AND OPPOSED TO
HIS EGALITARIAN GOALS. THEIR VOTES ARE EASILY NEGATED.

B. THE CABINET IS BY AND LARGE A GROUP OF YES-MEN. A
BLAKE DEFECTION, MORE SO PATTERSON, WOULD BE DAMAGING.
BOTH ARE RUMORED TO BE UNHAPPY, BUT BLAKE'S SPINE HAS BEEN
DISSOLVED IN RUM, AND PATTERSON IS ENOUGH OF A REALIST TO

RECOGNIZE HE HAS NO FUTURE OUTSIDE THE PNP. THE ONLY OTHER STRONG FIGURE IN THE CABINET IS SPAULDING AND THE P.M. NEED NOT FEAR ANY OPPOSITION FROM HIM TO THE LEFT-WARD DRIFT. THE FORMAL PARTY APPARATUS UNDER D.K. DUNCAN

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AND THE PNP YOUTH UNDER LOUIS CASTRIOTTA ARE MORE RADICAL THAN THE P.M. AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO SPUR THE MOVEMENT TO THE LEFT

C. THE POLICE RANK AND FILE ARE NOT GREAT FANS OF MANLEY OR SPAULDING. THEY RESENT POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTIES, ARE UNEASY ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE PNP "WATCHMAN SERVICE", AND FRANKLY WOULD RELISH THE PROSPECT OF A "NO HOLDS BARRED" OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE GUNMEN, PARTICULARLY THE UNTOUCHABLES IN SPAULDING'S GARRISON GANG. THEY ARE IMMOBILIZED, HOWEVER, BY A LACK OF LEADERSHIP. THE COMMISSIONER HAS PROVED A PLIANT MANLEY SUPPORTER, WHILE OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE BEEN WILLING TO PLAY POLITICS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THEIR PROMOTION PROSPECTS.

D. THE ARMY (JDF) WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE OR TWO OFFICERS IS APOLITICAL. THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES PROFESSIONALS, DISDAIN THE POLICE, AND RESENT HAVING TO BAIL THEM OUT WHEN THINGS GET OUT OF HAND. IT WOULD TAKE A FLAGRANTLY UNCONSTITUTIONAL ACT BY THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT BEFORE THEY WOULD GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO INTERVENING IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

E. THE CHURCH AND ITS LEADERS, AS INSTITUTIONALIZED IN THE JAMAICA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, IS A GROUP WHICH MANLEY DOES NOT IGNORE OR RIDE ROUGH SHOD OVER. CRITICISM FROM THEM MUST BE ANSWERED, IF ONLY TO POINT OUT THAT THE EVILS IN JAMAICAN SOCIETY WHICH CONCERN THEM ARE ATTRIBUTABLE TO SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE P.M. AND HIS PARTY.

F. IN SUN, AS LONG AS THE MOVEMENT TO THE LEFT IS A DRIFT AND NOT A QUANTUM LEAP THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT FORCES IN JAMAICA WHICH CAN CHECK MANLEY. AS FOR SPAULDING AND HIS GARRISON GANG, HE CAN BE CHECKED WHENEVER MANLEY GIVES THE WORD. MANY WITHIN THE SECURITY FORCES WOULD RELISH THE ASSIGNMENT.

7. HOW FAR ARE SEAGA AND THE JLP WILLING TO GO IN OPPOSING MANLEY AND THE PNP- IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF THE JLP STEPPING UP ITS LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN RESPONSE TO MANLEY'S

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ACTIONS?

A. SEAGA HAS HIS "GUNMEN" OR "SOLDIERS". SOME ASTUTE LOCAL OBSERVERS CONTEND THAT IF IT WERE A SIMPLE QUESTION OF JLP VERSUS PNP GUNMEN, SEAGA WOULD WIN. MANLEY, HOWEVER, HAS THE SECURITY FORCES OF THE GOVERNMENT AT HIS DISPOSAL. JLP GUNMEN ARE NO MATCH FOR THAT KIND OF FIREPOWER AND ORGANIZATION

B. MANLEY WOULD LOVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THE SECURITY FORCES TO ROOT OUT SEAGA'S SUPPORTERS. INDEED, A GOOD ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT THE RECENT VIOLENCE WAS A PNP INSPIRED PROVOCATION TO FLUSH THEM OUT INTO THE OPEN. SEAGA CAN NOT AFFORD THAT, AND HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO RESTRAIN HIS SUPPORTERS. HE NEEDS THEM FOR THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, MAINLY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR JLP CANDIDATES, AND ACT AS A COUNTERFORCE TO INTIMIDATION ATTEMPTS BY PNP GUNMEN.

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C. LEST ANYONE BE IN DOUBT, SEAGA IS NO ANGEL, BUT IF ANYTHING HE IS RATIONAL. AS AN OPPOSITION LEADER HE GETS

ONLY ONE SHOT, AND THAT THE EMBASSY BELIEVES HE WILL SAVE FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION. POWER IS HIS GOAL AND THAT CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE BALLOT-BOX. HE NEEDS HIS GUNMEN TO ASSURE SAFE PASSAGE FOR HIS SUPPORTERS TO THE POLLING STATION

8. IN 1972, MANLEY SOUGHT OFFICE CAMPAIGNING AGAINST INFLATION, CRIME AND UNEMPLOYMENT--COULD THE JLP WIN AN ELECTION ON THE SAME ISSUES OR IS THE MANLEY CHARISMA INTACT?

A. MANLEY'S THESPIAN POWERS ARE UNDIMINISHED. HE IS PLAYING TO A MUCH MORE CYNICAL AUDIENCE THESE DAYS, HOWEVER. THE MIDDLE CLASS, WHO PROVIDED THE MONEY, VOTES AND SUPPORT FOR HIS 1972 VICTORY, LARGELY HAVE TURNED AGAINST HIM. MANY ARE TERRIFIED AND VOTING WITH THEIR FEET. IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATIONS AT THE UNITED KINGDOM, CANADIAN, AND OUR VISA OFFICE HAVE SOARED. DOCTORS, LAWYERS, INDUSTRIALISTS, AND EVEN PNP MP'S ADD THEIR
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NAMES TO THE WAITING LISTS DAILY

B. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BAUXITE LEVY, WHOSE WINDFALL BENEFIT HAS BEEN SQUANDERED ALREADY, MANLEY IS HARD PRESSED TO POINT TO ANY MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. IN THE FOUR YEARS OF HIS GOVERNMENT, INFLATION HAS ACCELERATED, UNEMPLOYMENT IS STATIC, THANKS ONLY TO THE PUBLIC FINANCED CRASH WORKERS' PROGRAM WHICH PROVIDE "SHOVEL-LEANING" EMPLOYMENT TO PNP SUPPORTERS, AND THE CRIME RATE HAS INCREASED DESPITE THE MUCH HERALDED "GUN COURT".

C. JUDGED BY PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN A FAILURE. EXOGENOUS FACTORS, TO BE SURE, HAVE WORKED AGAINST IT, BUT NO MORE SO THAN THAT EXPERIENCED BY OTHER ENERGY POOR THIRD WORLD GOVERNMENTS. EARNINGS FROM BAUXITE, TOURISM, SUGAR, AND BANANAS ARE DOWN. THE PROSPECT OF THEIR INCREASING IN THE SHORT TERM IS POOR. FX RESERVES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME LOW. ONLY WITH DRACONIAN CUTS IN PUBLIC SERVICES CAN AN FY 1977 BUDGET BE PRESENTED THAT HAS ANY HOPE OF BEING FINANCED

D. DESPITE THE FOREGOING LITANY OF DISASTER, EMBASSY BELIEVES MANLEY COULD WIN AN ELECTION NEXT WEEK, ALTHOUGH WITH A REDUCED MAJORITY. HE CANNOT, HE WILL NOT CONDUCT A STRAIGHT-UP ISSUES CAMPAIGN. THE THEME OF THE MASS RALLY HE ADDRESSED FEBRUARY 4 (CANCELLED IN KINGSTON BUT RESCHEDULED IN PSANISH TOWN) IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE TYPE OF CAMPAIGN HE WILL RUN--

"THE DEFENSE OF SOCIALISM, PEOPLE POWER". SEAGA CAN
READ A BALANCE SHEET, MANLEY CAN READ A CROWED. GERARD

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